

Critical Incident Stress Services

A ***debriefing*** is a group meeting or discussion about a distressing critical incident. Based upon the core principles of education and crisis intervention, the critical incident stress debriefing is designed to mitigate the impact of a psychologically traumatic event (a critical incident) and to assist personnel in recovering as quickly as possible from the stress associated with the event. The formal critical incident stress debriefing is a structured group meeting using a seven-stage intervention process.

A debriefing is provided by the Nebraska Critical Incident Stress Management Program through a specially trained team of volunteers that includes a mental health professional and peer support personnel from the emergency services. The peer support is from a similar service (such as law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical services) that didn't participate in the actual event.

Defusing is a shortened version of the debriefing. Defusings take place immediately or relatively soon after the critical incident is finished and typically last less than one hour. The leader of a defusing may be a peer support person or one of the mental health support people on the critical incident stress management team. Defusings are designed to either eliminate the need to provide a formal debriefing or to enhance the debriefing if it is still necessary to provide one.

For more information, contact:

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